

G8 backs Obama over 1967 borders

AFP, Deauville

The leaders of the world's richest countries were to give "strong support" yesterday to President Barack Obama's insistence that a Mideast peace deal be based on pre-1967 borders.

In a draft statement at the G8 summit in Deauville, northern France, the leaders urge the Israelis and Palestinians "to return to substantive talks with a view to concluding a framework agreement on all final status issues."

"To that effect, we express our strong support for the vision of Israeli-Palestinian peace outlined by President Obama on May 19, 2011."

The draft was still being discussed on the summit's final day, but the section on Israel-Palestine was not expected to change.

In a keynote policy speech on May 19, Obama included a clear call for Israel and the Palestinians to use the borders before the 1967 Six Day War as the basis for talks to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

That was sharply rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said Israel would be "indefensible" if it returned to the borders which existed in 1967, which would not include dozens of settlements.

The G8 final declaration, seen by AFP, said "negotiations are the only way toward a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the conflict. The framework for these negotiations is well known."

"Aspirations of the peoples in the region need to be heeded including that of the Palestinians for a viable and sovereign State and that of Israelis for security and regional integration."

N Sudan says 'open' to negotiations on Abyei

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan's chief Abyei negotiator said yesterday the northern government was "open" to negotiations with south Sudan over the contested border region of Abyei, as the south said more than 150,000 people had fled the area.

"We are open to negotiations," Al-Dirdiri Mohammed Ahmed, the National Congress Party's chief negotiator on Abyei, told AFP.

Ahmed, popularly known as Dirdiri, said the NCP and the south Sudan People's Liberation Movement would meet in Addis Ababa on Saturday for talks that will also be attended by the African Union panel on Sudan and South Africa's former president Thabo Mbeki.

Yemen's opposition leader warns of war

Indians advised to leave, Qatar closes embassy

AFP, Sanaa

Yemeni opposition tribal chief Sheikh Sadiq al-Ahmar yesterday said a truce is in force between his fighters and security forces in Sanaa but that he is ready for war if the embattled president wants one.

Earlier in the day, 12 tribesmen, a Republican Guards general and an unknown number of other Guards were killed and wounded in fighting sparked by tribesmen trying to reach Sanaa to aid Ahmar, tribal and military sources said.

"There is a truce between us and (President) Ali Abdullah Saleh" for mediation to take place, said Ahmar, head of the powerful Hashid federation, at a funeral for 30 of his fighters killed in clashes with Saleh's forces in the capital, which began on Monday and lasted until Thursday.

"If the Saleh regime wants a peaceful revolution, we are ready for that. If he chooses war, we will fight him," Ahmar said.

Tens of thousands of mourners turned out for the funeral, an AFP correspondent said, while elsewhere in Sanaa, thousands of pro-



World leaders pose for a photo at the end of the G8 summit in Deauville, France yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ban Ki-moon backs Obama's Mideast peace proposals

AFP, Paris

US President Barack Obama's insistence on a Middle East deal based on pre-1967 borders would help the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, UN chief Ban Ki-moon said yesterday.

"President Obama has outlined a series of very important parameters on questions of security and territory which can help the peace process," Ban told Le Monde newspaper.

"I know that the Israelis are unhappy about it but a resumption of the peace process is essential if we are to avoid a confrontation," added Ban.

He said a confrontation would lead to a UN vote on recognition of a Palestinian state.

NEWS IN brief

Pakistan-based LeT 'in same rank' as al-Qaeda: US

AFP, New Delhi

The US Homeland Security chief said yesterday the banned Pakistani Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) was as dangerous as the al-Qaeda network.

Janet Napolitano, speaking on a trip to New Delhi where she met top Indian security officials, was asked about the threat posed by the group blamed for the 2008 Mumbai attacks in which 166 people were killed.

"It is one that seeks to harm people and the US perspective is that the LeT is an organisation which is in the same ranks of al-Qaeda-related groups," Napolitano told reporters after day-long talks in New Delhi.

E coli outbreak spreading in Germany

AFP, Berlin

More than 270 people in Germany have fallen seriously ill because of potentially deadly bacteria, which has been found in imported Spanish cucumbers, officials said yesterday.

The Robert Koch Institute, the national disease centre, said more than 60 new cases of haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS) had been reported in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number to 276.

S Korea court jails Somali pirate for life

AFP, Busan

A South Korean court yesterday jailed a Somali pirate for life after convicting him of the attempted murder of the captain of a hijacked ship.

Mahomed Araye was also found guilty of maritime robbery. Prosecutors had sought a death sentence.

Another member of the gang that seized the South Korea-operated chemical carrier Samho Jewelry in the Arabian Sea in January was sentenced to 15 years in prison, while two others received 13 years.

35 feared dead after Pakistan bus crash

AFP, Muzaffarabad

Up to 35 people are feared dead after the bus they were travelling in plunged into a river in Pakistani Kashmir yesterday, police said.

The accident took place in the mountain village of Changan in the Neelum valley, some 130 kilometres (80 miles) northeast of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir.

Aussie student finds universe's 'missing mass'

AFP, Sydney

A 22-year-old Australian university student has solved a problem which has puzzled astrophysicists for decades, discovering part of the so-called "missing mass" of the universe during her summer break.

Undergraduate Amelia Fraser-McKevie made the breakthrough during a holiday internship with a team at Monash University's School of Physics, locating the mystery material within vast structures called "filaments of galaxies".

Monash astrophysicist Dr Kevin Pimbblet explained that scientists had previously detected matter that was present in the early history of the universe but that could not now be located.

"There is missing mass, ordinary mass not dark mass ... It's missing to the present day," Pimbblet told AFP.

"We don't know where it went. Now we do know where it went because that's what Amelia found."

Fraser-McKevie, an aerospace engineering and science student, was able to confirm after a targeted X-ray search for the mystery mass that it had moved to the "filaments of galaxies", which stretch across enormous expanses of space.

Pimbblet's earlier work had suggested the filaments as a possible location for the "missing" matter, thought to be low in density but high in temperature.

Pimbblet said astrophysicists had known about the "missing" mass for the past two decades, but the technology needed to pinpoint its location had only become available in recent years.

Europeans consider Lagarde IMF job done deal



AFP, Deauville

EU capitals now consider the appointment of French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde as the next head of the IMF is a done deal, after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hailed her candidacy, a European official told AFP at the G8 summit.

"Lagarde? It's done," the senior source told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity as the decision depends on the IMF and not on EU or G8 leaders.

Europe has traditionally provided the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, and the major EU governments have rallied around Lagarde's bid for the job following the arrest of the former chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn on sex assault charges.

On Thursday, Clinton said that although the United States had not adopted an official position, she personally welcomed Lagarde's candidacy.

"I am a strong supporter of qualified women, which she is certainly one, being given the opportunity to lead international organisations," she said, referring to Lagarde. "I actually know her. I admire her."

A senior White House official said that French President Nicolas Sarkozy had discussed the candidacy by Lagarde with US President Barack Obama, but said Obama had given no undertaking to support her.

LIBYA CONFLICT Russia pledges to mediate

AFP, Deauville

Russia said yesterday it would ramp up diplomatic efforts to mediate an end to the conflict in Libya, after being encouraged to do so by G8 partners at a two-day summit in northern France.

Moscow's special representative to Africa, Mikhail Margelov, said both France and the United States had requested Russia to take a weekly ritual.

Those killed in Dael were chanting "Allahu akbar" or "God is greatest" on rooftops when they were gunned down at dawn, Abdel Rahman, a witness said.

Baton-wielding troops also violently dispersed thousands of people protesting in the northern town of Aleppo and the eastern town of Deir Ezzor, the head of another rights group said.

In Aleppo, security forces used truncheons to disperse hundreds of protesters gathered in the Salaheddin district, Rihawi said, while in the northeastern town of Derbassiyyeh, some 400 people protested against the regime

Violence across Syria kills eight

Lead transition or go, Sarkozy tells Assad

AFP, Damascus

Syrian security forces killed at least eight people yesterday as anti-regime protests broke out across Syria, including in the capital Damascus, activists said.

The killings took place as pro-democracy protesters again took to the streets in several cities and towns across the country after Muslim Friday prayers, in what has become a weekly ritual.

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For Srebrenica survivors arrest came too late

AFP, Srebrenica

The arrest of Ratko Mladic came late for survivors of the Srebrenica massacre where forces under his command committed the worst atrocity in Europe since World War II.

"This arrest does not make me happy at all," Hatidza Mehmedovic, a Muslim whose two sons and husband were killed in the July 1995 massacre, told AFP.

"It is only a drop of justice".

In the yard in front of her house in Srebrenica, where she returned nine years ago, Mehmedovic looks at a fir that her younger son Almir had planted just before he was brutally killed by Mladic's troops, at the age of just 17.

So far, some 4,500 massacre victims have been buried at the Potocari memorial.

Mehmedovic goes there almost everyday.

Mehmedovic remembered Mladic's arrival in Potocari, on July 11, 1995, where tens of thousands of people gathered in a UN military base hoping they would be rescued with the peacekeepers.

"Only one meter and a ribbon separated us. He had a megaphone and he told us, in front of television cameras, 'Don't be afraid, all of you will be transferred', she said.

"Once the cameras were turned off, they started to separate men from women."

Fahreta Dedic's three brothers were killed in the massacre. "No sentence could bring them back," she said.

"I feel no satisfaction at all. Our souls are empty," she added, in tears.



In this photo taken on March 29, 1993 a woman refugee from the Serb-besieged Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica bursts into tears upon her arrival in a refugee camp with some 2000 fellow refugees fleeing the Bosnian Serbian forces in a UN convoy.

'The butcher of the Balkans' on the run

From Belgrade bars to the countryside

AFP, Belgrade



indicted for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1995.

The general known as "the butcher of the Balkans" remained in the Serb-controlled part of Bosnia after the war, threatening a bloodbath if anyone attempted to detain him.

He later moved to Belgrade and lived openly there until the ouster of Milosevic in October 2000, visiting cafes and restaurants and attending football matches.

After the fall of his ally -- who was to die in prison while being tried by the ICTY -- Mladic vanished with the help of former military aides, who moved him from flat to flat in the capital, where he rarely went outdoors, according to Serbian officials.

There were also persistent reports that he was being moved between different military barracks across the country.

He is also suspected of seeking refuge in monasteries.

Earlier this year his family tried to get him officially declared dead, with his wife saying she had not seen him since 2003, but the petition was turned down.